

He who is not proud of his ancestors shows either that he had no ancestors to be proud of, or else that he is a degenerate son -GROVERINOR.

GENEALOGY

OF THE
BLISS FAMILY

IN
AMERICA,

FROM ABOUT THE YEAR 1550 TO 1880
Compiled by JOHN HOMER BLISS, Norwich, Conn.

INCLUDING THE COMPILATIONS OF JUDGE OLIVER BLISS MORRIS OF SPRINGFIELD,
MASS. AND SYLVESTER BLISS, ESQ. OF BOSTON MASS.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth now withering on the ground
An other race the following spring supplies
They fall successive and successive rise
So generations in their course decay,
So flourish these when those have passed away
Peop's Homer Booked

BOSTON MASS
PRINTED BY THE AUTHOR.
1881

Genealogy of the Bliss Family in America from About the Year 1650 to 1880 (1884)

This genealogy of the Bliss family, compiled by John Homer Bliss of Norwich, Connecticut, was originally published in 1881, and this edition soon became unavailable due to the destruction of the original plates used to print the book. In 1904 Henry Putnam Bliss used portions of the original volume to create the edition used in our database, which includes newer information that was compiled in the years between the publication of the first and second editions.

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THIRD GENERATION

JONATHAN, son of Thomas Bliss of England, was born about the year 1575 or 1585. He died 1635-6. It is not known who he married or when, but he had several children born to him, four of whom are said to have died young; the remaining children were—
7. *THOMAS, b., d. 1649.
8. MARY.

THOMAS, of England, of Granfree, Mass., and afterwards of Hartford, Conn., was a son of the first Thomas Bliss of England and was born about the year 1590 or 1595. He married in England about 1612-15 to Margaret, and had ten children, of whom six were born previous to their removal to this country; these were named respectively Ann, Mary, Thomas, Nathaniel, Lawrence, and Samuel, and in this country were probably born Sarah, Elizabeth, Hannah, and John. Owing to religious persecutions, Thomas Bliss was compelled to leave England, and in the autumn of 1635 he with his younger brother George embarked at Plymouth with their families for the then wilderness of America. Upon their arrival at Boston as before stated, Thomas located temporarily at Granfree, Mass., whence he afterwards removed to Hartford, Conn., where he died in

1644. His daughter thought her maiden name was Margaret Lawrence, and that she was born about the year 1594, and married to Thomas Bliss about 1612-15. She was a good looking woman, with a square oblong face that betokened great capability and force of character. She had a broad open brow, fair hair, and blue eyes. After the death of her husband, which took place about the close of the year 1639, she managed the affairs of the family with great prudence and judgment. Her eldest daughter Ann was married to Robert Chapman, of Saybrook, Conn., April 29, 1642, choosing April for their marriage month instead of May, for the old English adage ran—"To wed in May you'll rue the day." She removed with her husband to Saybrook, where her eldest brother, Thomas, came soon after to live with them, and where he married in 1644, and in 1659 removed to Norwich, Conn., with thirty-four or thirty-five others, and effected the settlement of that town. The other children of the widow Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, concluded not to settle there permanently, chills and fever prevailing in some localities near the town, she and her children, therefore, in the year 1643 removed to the settlement of Springfield, Mass., thirty males or more up the Connecticut River. Margaret sold her property in Hartford, and gathering her household goods and cattle together, prepared with her eight children to make the journey through the forest to Springfield, which she accomplished in about five

1640. We have been unable to ascertain the ages of both of all the children in the family, but it is evident that Thomas was the oldest son, and that he must have been of age at the time of the distribution of the lots in Hartford, which would place his birth at about the year-1615-16. The births of the other children must have occurred between that of Thomas Jr. (unless Ann and Mary were older) and the death of Thomas, sen. in 1640, which would allow two years at least between them. Probably there were no other sons, of age at the time of their arrival in Hartford, as otherwise they would have had lots assigned them, and there is nothing more discoverable respecting any of the children in Hartford.

days Nathaniel and Samuel, her second and fourth sons, had been there previously, and a dwelling had been prepared for the family on their arrival. A journey like this was thought a great thing in those days. They camped out in the forest three nights with their teams, so sparsely was the country settled at that time, and the forests infested with savage beasts and scarcely less savage Indians, were broken only by the single roads to the seaboard, on the east and on the south, and these were by no means of the best. Mrs. Margaret had acquaintances in Springfield whom she had known in England, and here she settled down for the remainder of her days. It is said she purchased a tract of land in Springfield one mile square situated in the south part of the town, on what is now Main Street, and bordering on Connecticut River. One of the streets laid out on the manor tract has been named "Margaret Street," and another "Bliss Street," on which has been built a Congregational Church. She lived to see all her children brought up, married and established in homes of their own, except Hannah, who died at about twenty three years of age. Mrs. Margaret died in Springfield, August 28, 1784, after a residence in America of nearly fifty years, and over forty since her husband's death. She was an energetic, efficient woman, capable of transacting most kinds of business, and was long remembered in Springfield as a woman of great intellectual ability. Another with these characteristics seldom fails to transmit them to posterity. Her will, dated in September (1683 ?) mentions her son John, son Lawrence, deceased son Samuel, daughter Elizabeth (Morgan), deceased, daughter Mary Parsons (widow of Joseph) and daughter Sarah (Scott). As no reference is made to Thomas or Ann, it has been questioned whether they were her children. But neither is there any reference to the children of her son Nathaniel, deceased, to whom in their younger years she had been guardian and guide, so that it cannot be inferred from such omission that Thomas Jr. and Ann were not her children. As she survived her husband forty-four years, it may have been that she was a second wife, and that these were children of a former marriage. He must have died comparatively young, or there may have been a great disparity in their ages. She lived more than ninety years, in spite of the hardships and troubles she had passed through, and her grandchildren were generally very strong of constitution and long-lived, so were also her children. She was a woman of superior abilities, great resolution, and uncommon enterprise, and is entitled to the respect of her descendants, both for her vigor of mind and constitution.

The following are the names of the children of Thomas and Margaret Bliss with their chronology as far as we have been able to ascertain:

1 ANN b in England - m April 29 1642 Robert Chapman of Saybrook, Conn. and d November 29 1685 He was born about 1616 and came from Hull England to Boston in August 1635 and in November to Saybrook, Conn. He d October 13 1697 Issue 1 John, b July 1644
2 Robert, b September 1646 3 Ann b September 12, 1648 d next year 4 Hannah b October 4 1650 5 Nathaniel b February 16 1653 6 Mary b April 15 1655 7 Sarah b September 25 1657

10 MARY b in England - m November 26 1646 Joseph Parsons Springfield Mass. who d October 9 1683 She d January 29 1712 Mr Parsons associated with Mr Pynchon was one of the most prominent men in the public business of the place and quite wealthy. He was a witness to the deed given by the Indians to Pynchon † July 15 1636 Joseph and Mary Parsons had five children before their removal to Northampton,

Mass. in 1664 (Their son Ebenezer born in this place May 1 1655 was the first white child born in the town and he was killed by the Indians at Northfield, September 2 1675.) Here in Northampton they had seven more children making twelve in all but these named Benjamin John and David died young Mary Bliss the mother of the family two years after the birth of her youngest child was charged with witchcraft by some of her neighbors who were envious of their prosperity and endeavored in this way to disgrace them. She was sent to Boston for trial where the jury gave her a full acquittal of the crime and she returned home to Northampton from whence they removed back to Springfield in 1679 Just after her acquittal in Boston her son Ebenezer was killed by the Indians, and those who had been instrumental in bringing her to trial said "Behold, though human judges may be bought off God's vengeance neither turns aside nor slumbers." It is said that she possessed great beauty and talents but was not very amiable.

11 *THOMAS b in England - d April 15 1692

[A Mr. Thomas Blythe (aged twenty years) came over in the barque "Globe" from London August 7 1635. It was Thomas Bliss afterwards of Norwich Conn. it gives his birth date as 1615.]

12 *NATHANIEL b in England d November 8 1654

13 *LAWRENCE b in England d in 1676

14 *SAMUEL, b in England in 1624 d March 23 1736

15 SARAH, b at Boston about 1635-6, m at Springfield Mass., July 29, 1659 John Scott by whom she had nine children, only one of whom (William) had issue. Mr Scott died January 2 1690 and the same year she was married again to Samuel Terry. She d September 27 1705.

†The new settlement of Springfield Mass. was laid out and conducted by William Pynchon a man of great energy and enterprise and uncommon independence in religious opinions, which had brought him into great trouble in Boston and he eventually left Springfield and returned home to England (1652) on account of the greater liberty of conscience enjoyed there than in the colonies. He was not and liberal and the settlers owed him better treatment than he received from them.

16 ELIZABETH b. at Boston Mount, about 1687 was m. February 15 1689/90, as the second wife of Sergeant Miles Morgan (b. 1615 and d. May 28 1699) who had eight children by a previous marriage. Elizabeth had only one child, named Nathaniel b. June 14 1671. She was thirty-two or three years of age at the time of her marriage, and had been engaged in marriage before. But her intended husband was killed by the Indians.

17 HANNAH b. at Hartford 1639- d single January 25 1662.

18 *JOHN b. of Hartford 1640 d September 19 1702.

GEORGE, of England, of Lynn, Mass., 1637, of Sandwich Mass., 1638 and of Newport, R. I. was born in 1591. He emigrated to the country with his brother Thomas. In 1635 resided a short time at Lynn, thence removed to Sandwich Mass., on the Cape, where April 16 1640 a lot of one and a half acres of land was granted him, but he does not appear to have continued long in the Plymouth Colony for he was in Newport in 1649. In 1650 he was appointed with others to mend and make all the arms in Newport. Governor Arnold mentions him as one of whom he had bought land, and as one of the original purchasers of the island of Quonomicut, in 1655-6 he appears on the Colonial Records as a freeman, and he bought land in Newport as late as March 22, 1680. On that date articles of agreement were made whereby Bossa, an Indian captain of Narragansett, deeded (June 29 1680) a large tract of land called Misquamicutt, to seventy-six of the colonists, George Bliss being one of the number. (In 1669 the territory of Misquamicutt was incorporated under the name of Wiscataway.) Mr. Bliss died August 31 1687. It is known from records of Governor Arnold, that there was a son -19 *JOHN b. about 1645.

Misquamicutt was the Indian name of salmon.

Benedict Arnold, Governor of Rhode Island, succeeded Roger Williams in that office in 1657, and continued till 1680, was also governor 1682 to 1686, from 1688 to 1692, and from 1697 to 1699, in which last year he died. He had lived in Providence as early as 1625. In 1657 he and Coddington (and others) purchased of the Indian Sachems the island of Quonomicut. MASS. HIST. COLL. v 2:17

Governor Arnold was the first governor of Rhode Island under the Charter of King Charles I. granted July 8 1663. This charter was in force until the adoption by the State of the present Constitution, in November 1842. It is said that Governor Arnold was a son of William Arnold, one of the thirteen original proprietors of Providence, and (it is thought) he erected the old stone mill in Newport, as a clause in his will refers to "my stone built windgrist mill." He owned the land where that ancient structure stands. HIST. R. I.

He was the eldest son of William Arnold, was born in England, December 21 1615, removed from Providence to Newport in 1653, and "made" the royal charter in 1663. He married Germans' daughter of Shakesley Wescott, and had issue - Gedaght, Josiah Benedict, Jr. born about 1661, Free love, Oliver, Caleb, Gamsa's, Pascola and Penelope. SAWYER GEN. DIST.

FOURTH GENERATION

THOMAS of Rehoboth, Mass. son of Jonathan Bliss of England upon the death of his father in 1636 emigrated to America landing at Boston whence he removed to Braintree Mass. thence to Hartford Conn. and from there back to Weymouth near Braintree Mass from which place he removed in 1647 with many others and commenced a new settlement which they called Rehoboth. He was made a freeman in Cambridge Mass. May 18th 1642 and in the Plymouth Colony January 4th 1645. June 9th of the same year he drew a lot (No. 30) on the Great Plain or Seekonk. In 1646 he was appointed "to view the fence of the town lots" and in 1647 surveyor of highways. He died at Rehoboth in June 1649 and was undoubtedly buried in the old cemetery at Seekonk, Mass., (now Rumford, East Providence, R.I.) where the first pastor of the new colony was afterwards interred. But it is a matter of great regret that the authorities having the lands in charge have allowed the growth of unsightly weeds, bushes and brambles to such an extent as to render the identification of the earlier graves well nigh impossible even where

(The original purchase of land of Massasoit, in 1641 comprising the town of Rehoboth was "a tract eight miles square" and embraced what now constitutes the towns of Rehoboth, Seekonk, and Pawtucket, the second purchase now forms a part of Swansea and Barrington and the third and last was called the "North Purchase" now Attleboro Mass. and Cumberland R. I.

The celebrated Roger Williams, who believed it "the prerogative of man to think as he pleased and to speak as he thought," arrived at Rehoboth (then Seekonk) in the Spring of 1636 but soon crossed the stream and took up his abode in what is now the beautiful city of Providence, R. I.

The first white settler within the original limits of Rehoboth was "one Master William Blackstone" a minister who settled there about 1637 and who is described as a sort of "Ismaelite in religion" who left England through a dislike to the "Lord Bishops" and was very displeased with the "Lord Brethren." He d. May 26 1675.

A number of emigrants from Hingham and Weymouth, Mass., soon settled at Seekonk among whom were the Rev. Samuel Newman and a majority of his church at W. Mr. Thomas Bliss being one of the number—and in 1645 the proprietors were incorporated town wise under the Suptural name of Rehoboth.

the ravages of time have spared an occasional inscription. [And the same may be said of the old cemetery south of Rehoboth village.] Another unfortunate circumstance during the early part of the nineteenth century the destruction by fire of the records of the first church has deprived their posterity of much valuable information concerning the first settlers in Rehoboth. In the "N. E. Genealogical Register" vol. 4 p. 2892 it is stated that Thomas Bliss' will was dated the 8th of June, 1849, and also that it was put into court on the 8th, one of which statements has been considered erroneous but perhaps the will was deposited for safe keeping in the hands of the person who officiated as surrogate. The instrument mentions his son Jonathan, to whom he devised his house, his eldest daughter whose first name is not given, but is related to as the wife of Thomas Williams, Mary, wife of Nathaniel Harmon, of Braintree, son-in-law Nicholas Ide † who was probably a son of his wife Mrs. Ide, or Hyde, (by a previous husband) who had perhaps married a daughter and his son, Nathaniel. (His property was inventoried at £117 16s 4d.) We gather then that he had issue:

20. + JONATHAN, b. ab. 1825 d. ab. 1887

21. A daughter whom Thomas Williams

22. MARY whom Nathaniel Harmon, Braintree, Mass.

23. NATHANIEL, of Rehoboth or Hingham, Mass., was probably married and had a family, for there was a "Margaret, daughter of Nathaniel Bliss b. at Hingham on the 12th of the 5th month (November?) 1849" which was the same year in which the first child of his brother Jonathan was born, - and there was no other Nathaniel in that neighborhood at that early date. It is possible, therefore, that Nathaniel settled in Hingham. And as no descendants have been found or identified bearing the family name, it is presumed he had no sons who lived to maturity. [The Town Clerk of Hingham writes that there is no record there of any Bliss family.]

THOMAS, of Hartford, Saybrook, and Norwich, Conn., (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, Conn.) was born in England, and removed to America with his father in 1835. Soon after his father's death he removed to Saybrook. Here his allotment of land was east of Connecticut River in what is now Lyme, and his home lay in between John Omsted (Ormshead) on the north, and John Lay on the south. He sold his land here July 23, 1862, to

† It is not positively known who this Nicholas Ide is, but he had a son, Lieut. -Nicholas Ide, b. November (1854?) who m. December 27, (1878?) Mary Omsted, issue Nathaniel (d. March 14, 1902-3.) Jacob, Martha, Florence, John, and Ben James, all b. in Rehoboth, 1878-1883. By a second wife, Eliza, he had a son, Nicholas, jr., b. in Attleborough, July 25, 1887. Lieut. Nicholas d. June 9, 1923.

John Cornstock and Richard Smith having removed his family to Norwich Conn., two or three years previous. He was married, October 30th, 1644 to a wife named Elizabeth and they had six children born to them in Saybrook and their seventh child named Anne born in 1660 was the second English child born in Norwich. His allotment in Norwich was "next to Sergeant Leffingwell (opposite according to the ancient map) on the street as it runs south five acres and a fourth with a lane on the south leading to a watering place at the river." This homestead is still occupied by his descendants (1998) seven generations of the same name having successively inherited the homestead and dwell therein, the property being held under the original deed—and the house itself in its frame work is doubtless the original habitation built by the first grantee. In a country where the tenure is allodial and there are no rights of primogeniture or entailment, instances of two hundred years of family ownership are not very common.

In (1640?) Thomas Bliss and Matthew Griswold were appointed agents by the town of Saybrook to "lay out a lot of land to an Indian named The Giant," near Black Point, in what is now East Lyme Conn. The locality is still called "The Giant's Neck."

The energy sound health and good judgment of Thomas Bliss brought great prosperity which is evidenced by his having made a will, for only those who had considerable property to dispose of did so. As it was a very expensive affair in those days for the tyranny and rapacity of Sir Edmund Andros compelled the colonists to carry every such instrument to Boston to prove and have recorded in order that he (Sir Edmund) might avail himself of the fees of that office towards supporting the state in which he aspired to live, for he never appeared in the streets without guards or two or three servants following him—and it was quite as easy to obtain access to the King of England as to his ape, the governor of these colonies.

The town of Norwich was purchased from the Indian sachems of the Mahagan tribe in June 1659 and settled that year by thirty five men most of whom were from Saybrook, Conn. Thomas Bliss being one of the number. The following year 1660 the Rev James Fitch pastor of the church at Saybrook and the greater part of his church removed to Norwich where Mr F. officiated as pastor until about the year 1695 when by reason of age and infirmity he resigned the pastorate and in 1702 removed to the new town of Lebanon Conn. where he soon died. The original tract of Norwich was "2 miles square" the consideration given the Indians being £70.

Thomas Blase' will is dated April 17th 1688 two days before his death and in it provision was made for his wife Elizabeth and six daughters and his only living son, Samuel who was at that time thirty one years of age. His estate was estimated at 182 17s 7d. He had land "besides his homelot," over the river on the Little Plain at the Great Plain of the Falls in the Yantic meadow-in meadow at Beaver Brook in pasture east of the town and on West ward hill "is sue

24 ELIZABETH b at Saybrook, Conn. November 20 1645 m June 7, 1683

Edward Smith of New London Conn. This couple with their son John aet. 15 died of an epidemic disease in 1639-the son July 6th the wife July 10th and Mr. S. July 14th A son (Capt Obadiah b 1677) and six daughters went to reside at Norwich with relatives

25 SARAH b at Saybrook, August 20 1647 m December 1663 Thomas Blumer, Norwich and had six children. He died in 1683 and she afterwards m April 8 1695 Dr. Solomon Tracy of Norwich by whom she had one son She d. August 29, 1750 Dr. T. died July 9, 1732

26 MARY b at Saybrook, Conn. February 7 1648 m about 1672-3 David son of Dea. Hugh and Ann Caulkins of New London Conn. (a Welshman who came to this country about 1640, stopped at Marshfield for a short season then removed to Lynn Mass., thence to New London about 1652, and finally to Norwich Conn. about 1659.) He had the estate of his father in that part of New London now known as Waterford near Niantic. From this union has descended the modest and elegant historian of Norwich and New London-Miss Frances M. Caulkins who was widely known as one of the leading antiquarian writers of her day. David Caulkins d. November 25 1717

27 THOMAS b at Saybrook, Conn. March 3 1652, d. January 28 1682, probably unnamed

28 DELMERANCE, b at Saybrook August 10 1655 m June 8 1682, Daniel Perkins of Norwich Conn.

29 SAMUEL, b at Saybrook, December 8 1657 d. December 30 1731

30 ANNE, b at Norwich September 15, 1650 m April 8 1683 Josiah Rockwell of N., and d. February 12 1734-15. He d. March 18 1722 Josiah Rockwell was a son of Josiah Rockwell and Rebecca Leominster of Windsor Conn. A son Daniel b October 24 1689 m November 23 1715 Tabitha Harbison and d. in 1748 leaving several children, among whom was Daniel Jr. b June 28 1724 who m. December 29 1748 Mindwell Bliss daughter of Samuel Bliss and Sarah Parker of Norwich Conn.

31 REBECCA b at Norwich March 18 1653 m April 8 1686 Israel Lathrop of N. and d. August 22 1737 He d. March 28 1733

NATHANIEL of Springfield Mass., (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss of Hartford Conn.) was born in England came to America with his father in 1635 and removed to Springfield Mass. with his mother in 1643 about seven years after that place was purchased from-

the Indians by Pynchon. Three years later when they were well settled he married Catharine daughter of Dea. Samuel Chapin of S. November 20 1748 a few days before his sister Mary was married to Joseph Parsons. Nathaniel and Catharine Bliss had four children Samuel who died aged one hundred and one and a half years. Margaret, who married **Nathaniel Foote** Mary, and Nathaniel, the last lived to the age of eighty-three years though the father died November 1 1654 before this Nathaniel was two years old [Widow Catharine Bliss about eight months after her husband's death married Thomas Gilbert, July 31, 1655 by him she had four more children when he died June 5 1662 and she soon married her third husband Samuel Marshfield, December 23 1664 and by him she had her usual number of four children making twelve in all. Not much time lost in recurring or widowhood but times were hard for a widow with little children and men at this time outnumbered the women in the colonies and there was no lack of suitors for single women.] She died February 4 1712. Issue

32 SAMUEL, b November 7 1647 d June 19 1749

33 "MARGARET" b November 12 1648 m May 2, 1672 **Nathaniel Foote** Colchester Conn. where she d. April 3 1745 He was b. at Wethersfield Conn. January 14 1648-d was the son of Nathaniel and grandson of Nathaniel "the settler." He resided at Hatfield Mass. two years Springfield four years and at Stafford and Blanford Conn. and lastly at Wethersfield where he d. of consumption January 12 1703 His family subsequently removed to Jeremy's Farm since and now called Colchester Conn. -a tract of land on the road from Hartford to New London owned by Jeremiah Adams one of the first settlers of Hartford. Mr Foote was a Quatarmaster in the army during King Philip's war and was in the fight at Turner's Falls (Conn. River) under the brave Capt. Turner who it is said that night fought hand to hand with Philip himself. Next day Turner and most of his men were killed by the Indians and Foote though badly wounded was one of the few who escaped.

34 MARY b September 23 1651 m February 27, 1678 Nathaniel Holcomb farmer and lived in Simsbury Conn. He was a son of Thomas Holcomb of Windsor and was b. November 4 1648

35 NATHANIEL, b March 27 1653 d. December 23 1739 He m December 28 1676 Deborah (dan. of G. M. Geo.) Colten, who died November 26 1733 No issue. He adopted Joshua Field as his principal heir.

LAWRENCE, of Springfield Mass. (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss of Hartford, Conn.) was born in England removed to America with his father in 1635 and married in Springfield October 25 1654 to Lydia daughter of Dea. Samuel and Margaret Wright, and died in 1716 [She afterwards married October 31 1678 John Norton who